

## OHIO STATE GOVERNMENT SYMPOSIUM

### INTRODUCTION

This issue of the Law Journal contains a symposium on various aspects of the operation of state government in Ohio. Authored by members of the Office of the Attorney General, the six articles comprising the symposium treat recent developments in Ohio law that substantially alter the rights of the citizens of Ohio in relation to their state government and to each other. The direction of the law, to the extent it can be identified, is most certainly moving away from the idea that the federal government is the primary protector of these rights. The first three articles in this symposium demonstrate the importance of the state giving citizens greater control over a governmental machinery which, of necessity, will become increasingly influential in regulating their daily activities. The latter three articles contain very timely analyses of the expanded role of state government in protecting both economic and civil rights of its citizens in dealing with one another.

The first three articles deal with recent changes in the laws that regulate the internal operations of state agencies and the responsibilities of these agencies to parties affected by their actions. The article by Robert L. Brubaker and David E. Northrop analyzes the fundamental nature of an old problem in Ohio, judicial review of the rule-making process of administrative agencies, and suggests the possibility that recent developments may open the courthouse doors to parties adversely affected by newly promulgated regulations.

James B. Recchie, assisted by John J. Chernoski of the Law Journal staff, focuses on recent amendments to the Ohio open meeting statute that greatly expand the right of Ohioans to information about the decision-making process. The article thoroughly analyzes the scope of these amendments and their likely effects on the participation of Ohio's citizens in governmental affairs.

Also dealing with a recent change in the duties of public officials to keep the citizenry informed, the article by Gary Elson Brown reveals the fundamental difficulties with Ohio's new public records statute. Mr. Brown's discussion of the few cases construing this statute gives much-needed guidance in determining when the public has a right to inspect documents in the files of state agencies and what interests of confidentiality are still protected under the statute.

The remaining three articles deal with recent changes in the substantive rights of Ohio citizens in their relations with one another. Assistant Attorneys General Susan Garner Eisenman, Nina Rose Hatfield, and Maryann Baker Gall analyze the significance of recent legislative changes in the rights of Ohio women which have occurred

in response to the proposed Equal Rights Amendment to the United States Constitution. The article discusses recent enactments in several areas, including employment, housing, and public accommodations discrimination, divorce, rape, and credit.

The last two articles deal with the developing role of state government, and specifically the Ohio Attorney General's Office, in regulating trade. The increasing demand for state efforts to preserve a competitive marketplace by enforcement of state and federal antitrust laws is growing rapidly, as indicated by recent legislation in the United States Congress giving state attorneys general standing to sue in a *parens patriae* capacity. The article by four members of the Antitrust Section of the Ohio Attorney General's Office discusses Ohio's Valentine Act, the growing emphasis on enforcement activities by the Antitrust Section, and the priorities of the Section in carrying out its enforcement duties.

Finally, Robert S. Tongren and Margaret Ann Samuels of the Consumer Frauds and Crimes Section chronicle the development of Ohio laws protecting consumers. The authors analyze the statutes and significant decisions construing them, emphasizing the procedures and remedies available to Ohioans who have been manipulated through illegal sales practices. The article demonstrates the importance of active enforcement of these laws in protecting consumers from the hazards of misinformation.

The Law Journal thanks the authors for their dedicated effort throughout the preparation of this symposium.